

Ms. Mary Blanco, Board Member

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SUBJECT: FEASIBILITY OF HIRING HOURLY CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS

COMMITTEE: PERSONNEL, STUDENT, SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN: INFORMED, ENGAGED, & EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS

Classroom assistants have always been critical team members in delivering quality education to our students, today they are needed more than ever. As we continue to face challenges with the teacher shortage and retention crisis, as well as student learning gaps, especially after the pandemic, classroom assistants can help alleviate some of these challenges. Teachers sometimes feel overwhelmed as they attempt to meet the individual needs of their students, while keeping up with the duties that go beyond teaching and intervention such as data collection and grading. Over time, some teachers have become dissatisfied with the profession, feeling that they can no longer meet the demands of being an effective classroom teacher.

One way to support our teachers and students is by increasing the availability of classroom assistants in varied ways. Educators have long recognized the importance of support personnel as a way to address some of the challenges elementary school teachers face in our classrooms. Support in the classroom can allow teachers more time to do what they do best, instruct students. Research has shown that having classroom assistants has positive effects on student test scores in reading and math, with the most robust effects in reading. Other studies have shown that classroom assistants specifically have a positive impact on Elementary school teachers not only in alleviating their workload and allowing them to meet the needs of their students, but also making them feel supported by the administration and school district. Providing this support in our classrooms can have a tremendous positive impact not only on teacher retention and recruitment, but on student achievement as well.

Providing Classroom Assistants can effectively improve teacher satisfaction and mitigate the retention crisis while simultaneously improving student achievement. Classroom assistants will also help alleviate teacher stress and facilitate small group instruction. Hiring hourly classroom assistants is an intentional way to support our elementary school teachers and students.

This item seeks authorization from the Board for the Superintendent of Schools to explore the feasibility of hiring and assigning hourly classroom assistants in all elementary schools in Miami-Dade County.

The item has been reviewed and approved by the General Counsel's Office as to form and legal sufficiency.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MS. MARY BLANCO:**

That the School Board of Miami-Dade County authorize the Superintendent to:

1. Explore the feasibility of hiring hourly classroom assistants in the elementary school setting, with consideration being given to prioritizing kindergarten through third grade;
2. Explore how such an hourly classroom assistant position could be promoted; and
3. Provide a report regarding the feasibility of hiring hourly classroom assistants at the Personnel, Student, School, and Community Support meeting of June 14, 2023. This report should include a potential budgetary impact with possible assistant-to- classroom ratios.